

applications at village level are considered as part of the programme for promotion of application of electronics for social and rural development.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. INSCRIPT (Indian Script) Keyboard overlay adopted as per the Indian Standard (IS 13194 : 1991) is being popularly used as input mechanism to the computer which allows convenient use of both Roman as well as Indian alphabets.

(f) and (g) While there is no such proposal at present to make computer education compulsory, there are a number of schemes which promote computer education in schools and colleges.

[English]

Nuclear Weapon

*13 SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD :
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan Prime Minister in his address to UN General Assembly stated that Pakistan has the capability to develop nuclear weapons of its own;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Indian Government propose to review its stand on development of nuclear weapons; and

(d) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI):
(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In his speech to the 52nd Session of the UN General Assembly on 22nd September, 1997, the Pakistan Prime Minister said that "We have demonstrated that we can master the most advanced technologies. We can now deter external aggression".

(c) and (d) Government closely monitors all developments relating to Pakistan's clandestine nuclear weapons programme. Government of India remains fully committed to taking all necessary steps to safeguard its security and national interest in accordance with its assessment of developments relating to India's security environment.

Fight Against Corruption

*14. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :
SHRI MANGAL RAM PREMI :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Anti-Corruption Cell has been set up in the Prime Minister's Office;

(b) if so, the role and functions of the Cell;

(c) whether the Cell is recording corruption charges from the general public against public servants;

(d) whether there is any institutional mechanism to probe their charges and allegations; and

(e) the total number of complaints received by this Cell, till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. No Anti-Corruption Cell has been set up in the Prime Minister's Office. However, a small unit for monitoring anti-corruption cases has been raised in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) by reorganising the available staff. The Unit monitors and pursues the complaints on corruption with Ministries/Departments etc. whose Head of the Department is responsible for maintaining purity and integrity in accordance with the existing instructions.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Unit is recording all complaints received from the general public on the subject of corruption against public servants.

(d) All complaints of corruption against public servants are sent by the PMO to designated nodal officers of the rank of Joint Secretary in each Ministry/Department who are already having an institutional mechanism consisting of vigilance set-up headed by Chief Vigilance Officers and their supporting staff to enquire into complaints of corruption. The CVC and CBI are other agencies who provide necessary assistance, wherever required, to the Ministries/Departments.

(e) The Anti-Corruption Unit in the PMO has received 2402 complaints till the 12th November, 1997.

Population Control

*15. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether population control programme has not achieved its target during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of increase in population during each of the last three years in comparison to the earlier decades; and

(d) the effective steps taken to check the increase in population?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) and (b) No method-specific target for population control has been fixed in the country since 1st April, 1996. The system of setting targets from the Centre is replaced by a system of decentralised participatory planning approach at the grass root level to give more emphasis on quality of care and client's satisfaction. In respect of performance of family welfare programme though performance in the first year of target free approach (1996-97) compared with that of previous years was slightly lower; in the current year, it is showing an increasing trend.

(c) The annual exponential rate of growth of population during the decades 1971-81 and 1981-91 was 2.22 per cent and 2.14 per cent. However, as per Sample Registration System (SRS) estimates, the natural growth rate of population has since declined to 1.94 per cent., 1.93 per cent and 1.85 per cent during the years 1994, 1995 and 1996 respectively.

(d) The programmes of Department of Family Welfare are aimed at stabilising the population of the country at a level consistent with the requirement of national development. The use of contraceptives and terminal methods is being conversed with citizens in the reproductive age group for avoiding unwanted pregnancies and facilities for reproductive and child health through the State Health Systems are being provided for improving the reproductive and child health status of mothers/children which would keep the families small in the long run. The Reproductive and Child Health Services are proposed to be substantially improved and strengthened during the 9th Plan and availability of contraceptives will be improved by strengthening arrangements for social marketing of contraceptives. Panchayat Raj Institutions are proposed to be closely associated with the Programme.

[Translation]

Shortage of Blood

*16. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is considerable shortage of blood in various Government hospitals in the country; and

(b) if so, the details of programmes started by the Government for encouraging the people to donate blood voluntarily?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There is an overall shortage of blood particularly contributed by voluntary donations. As per WHO norms of 6-16 units (average 10 units of blood per hospital bed per annum), the requirement for about 6 lakh hospital beds in the country comes to about 60 lakh units per annum. At present, the total estimated collection of blood is about 30 lakh units per annum. There is, therefore, an overall shortage of blood to the extent of 50 per cent at the existing level.

In a recent Supreme Court Judgement in the public interest litigation between "Common Cause versus Union of India and others", the Hon'ble Supreme Court has issued a number of important directions with a view to co-ordinate all the blood banking activities addressed to handling of blood and ensuring its maximum safety. One of the important directives of the judgement is to put a stop to professional donor system within two years. To achieve this objective, we have to mobilise voluntary blood donation programme so as to make sufficient blood available as per requirement from voluntary donors. Central and State Blood Transfusion Councils have been set up as autonomous bodies to oversee the management of blood transfusion services in the country and promotion of the voluntary blood donation programme.

For generating much needed blood from the voluntary donors, our strategy is to motivate the people to come forward to donate blood voluntarily and at regular intervals. The Government of India have taken up a number of steps in this direction as per details annexed.

While it is important to raise the collection of blood, it is also essential to ensure proper and appropriate use of scarce blood. In today's medical programme, one unit of blood collected can be given to 7-8 patients by separating into components. The Government have set up 40 blood component laboratories all over the country which would make components available. A Plasma Fractionation Centre has also been set up at Bombay.